

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 NSC-05
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1918

S E C R E T CARACAS 3421

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, VE
SUBJECT: CONSULTATIONS ON ARMS RESTRAINT

REF: STATE 92467

1. I WILL NOT RPT NOT BE ABLE TO GET TO CONSALVI OR THE
PRESIDENT BEFORE THE END OF THE WEEK, AND I SEE NO WAY OF
PREPARING A SATISFACTORY CONSULTATION IN TIME FOR THE
APRIL 17 TIME FRAME. (ALSO, THAT WEEK HAS A LEGAL
HOLIDAY IN IT WHICH WILL LEAD TO A "PUENTE" HERE AND REDUCE
THEIR AVAILABILITY.) WE WILL THEREFORE HAVE TO AIM FOR THE
LATER DATE.

2. WITHOUT BENEFIT OF CONSULTATIONS WITH VENEZUELANS, THE
FOLLOWING ARE SOME PRELIMINARY COMMENTS WHICH MAY BE HELPFUL TO YOU:

(A) THE INITIAL CONSULTATIONS WILL HAVE TO BE AT THE
POLITICAL LEVEL. IT IS NOT AT ALL CLEAR THAT THE
VENEZUELANS HAVE REALLY TAKEN THE POLITICAL DECISION TO
MOUNT A SERIOUS, ORGANIZAED ARMS INTIATIVE, DESPITE THE CORDIAL
(BUT STILL VAGUE) ASSURANCES GIVEN DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL
CONVERSATIONS. (IN TYPICAL LATIN PSYCHOLOGY, THEY WERE BEING NICE
AS MUCH AS SUBSTANTIVE). THEREFORE, OUR
BASIC TASK REMAINS ONE OF CONVINCING THEM TO MOVE, AND ONLY THEN

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OF HELPING THEM FORGE A STRATEGY. I THINK
IT PREMATURE TO EXPECT THAT THEY WILL BE READY FOR
"TECHNICAL" DISCUSSION NOW, ALTHOUGH IT PROBABLY IS A
GOOD IDEA TO INCLUDE MILITARY OFFICIALS ON THE INITIAL
CONSULTATION. I DO NOT THINK THE PRESIDENT, OR ANYONE ELSE,
HAS QUITE FOCUSED ON THE DETAILS OF AN INTEGRATED PLAN INVOLVING
SUPPLIERS AND TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS, AND THEREFORE WE WILL HAVE

TO PROVIDE THE SUGGESTIONS AND PROPOSALS, AND "EDUCATE" TO SOME DEGREE.

(B) NO ONE SHOULD BE OVERLY SANGUINE ABOUT "INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES" THAT TRANSCEND A CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATIONS. IT DOES NOT QUITE WORK THAT WAY, AND UNLESS INITIATIVES ARE WELL UNDER WAY BY THEN WE MAY HAVE TO START ALL OVER AGAIN NEXT YEAR.

(C) I SIMILARLY DO NOT THINK WE SHOULD KID OURSELVES THAT WE CAN "ARRANGE" ALL THIS TO MAKE IT APPEAR AS A TOTALLY VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE WHICH "INVITES" US IN AS IF WE NEVER HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT BEFORE. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE TO AVOID THE IMPRESSION OF US "DICTATION," AND INDEED IT COULD NEVER BE THAT IN FACT. BUT WE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT AS A PRACTICAL MATTER WE ARE IN FACT GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE QUIETLY. NOR DO I THINK THAT THERE IS ANYTHING WRONG WITH THAT; IT IS A PERFECTLY LEGITIMATE AND DEFENSIBLE POSTURE TO TAKE, I.E., MUTUAL CONSULTATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS ON MATTERS THAT CONCERN US. WHAT I AM GETTING AT IS THAT I HOPE THE RELEVANT PASSAGE IN PARA 3 REFTTEL DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE ARE GOING TO TRY TO PLAY GAMES TO "PACKAGE" ALL THESE THINGS AND MAKE THEM APPEAR DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THEY ARE.
VAKY

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